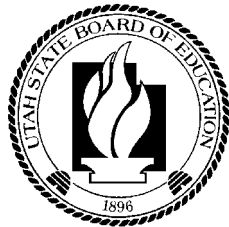


**The Report of the  
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Canyon Heights High School  
525 East DATC Road  
Kaysville, Utah 84037**

**January 8, 2003**



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**THE REPORT OF THE  
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**CANYON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL  
525 East DATC Road  
Kaysville, Utah 84037**

**January 8, 2003**

**UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

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## **FOREWORD**

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, January 8, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Canyon Heights High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Judy Nixon is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Canyon Heights High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Canyon Heights High School.

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# **CANYON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL**

## **ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

### **School Administration**

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### **Counseling**

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Ann Dale.....Social Worker

### **Support Staff**

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Barbara Watts, Office Assistant

Alta Evans, Attendance Secretary  
SuzAnn White, Teacher's Aide

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Paula Boss  
Kris Burch

Tina Hansen  
Lisa Johnston  
Ryan Jones  
Maury Kettell

Patti Redd  
Bonnie Lee  
Karen Talbot  
Jane Webecke

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To graduate students who are empowered academically, vocationally, and personally.

## **BELIEF STATEMENTS**

All people have dignity, worth and value and deserve to be treated with respect (unconditional positive regard) and fairness which does not necessarily mean equal.

All students are entitled to an education.

Basic human needs affect learning and must be addressed.

School climate, which must include a safe environment, affects learning dramatically. Language, behavior, dress, physical surroundings, beliefs and purpose of the school are parts of the school climate that enhance learning.

The action of the faculty in pursuing these beliefs will determine the integrity of the school.

Those who use the school facility are responsible to keep it clean, orderly and safe.

Cultural and individual diversity enriches the learning environment. The school program should reflect the diversity and uniqueness of the studentbody.

Learning values and ethics is an important part of a student's education.

All students can learn and must be taught effectively according to their individual needs.

An environment of free inquiry, suited to the age and development of the student, is essential to learning.

The best educational decisions are collaborative efforts of the stakeholders.

Competence in basic academic, interpersonal and technological skills increases personal growth and opportunity.

Responsibility, a necessary skill, is learned through consistent accountability, expectations, opportunities and examples. Focusing on the consequences of attendance, timeliness, choices of behavior and learning helps students learn this skill.

Development of skills and perspectives that encourage lifelong learning will enhance life and career choices.

Valid assessment is critical to efficient teaching, learning and accountability.



## **MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

Lynn Baty, Box Elder School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

George Miller, Utah State Office of Education

# **VISITING TEAM REPORT**

## **CANYON HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL**

### **CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE**

Canyon Heights is one of Davis District's two alternative high school programs. Approximately 150 students attend the school each year. The facility was designed and built specifically for teen parents. Originally, students assisted in the childcare lab, receiving vocational credit and being instructed in parenting and occupational childcare. In 1998 Head Start obtained a grant and became the program's childcare provider and educational partner. A pilot program for non-pregnant teens was added in January 2002. The original group was 30 students, identified and referred by high school counselors as having non-aggressive internalizing behaviors, depression, and academic challenges. Some of these students had dropped out of school. The two populations were found to be compatible. The non-parenting group had positive outcomes warranting continuation of the program. Canyon Heights has eight classrooms, a commons area, industrial kitchen, media center, and nine childcare classrooms. Students are able to take all core courses as well as special education, reading, vocational, and various elective courses. The school begins at 8:30 and runs on a modified block schedule until 3:30. Teachers have a 2.5-hour block of time each week for professional staff development activities. The Canyon Heights faculty consists of 11 contracted teachers, 5 full-time and 6 part-time. All faculty members are certified teachers. Davis Junior High School, Mountain High School, and the Davis Applied Technology College (DATC) are all nearby (walking distance) and benefit Canyon Heights with exchanging teachers and classes as needed, especially so that "endorsed" teachers are involved in most, if not all classes. Some graduates receive a Davis District adult diploma and others, upon meeting requirements, receive diplomas from their referring high schools.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of their profile?*

It is evident from the profile that the staff has assembled a comprehensive collection of data and has analyzed the data to make decisions regarding school improvement goals, staff development needs, and allocation of resources. Because of the unique nature of this school, analysis of the data is viewed from a different perspective than that of a standard high school. The staff does an outstanding job of evaluating student data both for the overall graduation rate as well as those who have the potential for graduation. They have also identified that the graduation rate of potential graduates is more meaningful and a stronger measure of program effectiveness while the overall graduation rate is more indicative of the type of student group enrolled at Canyon Heights. Although graduation is their primary goal, students also work toward secondary goals such

as preparing to pass the GED, improving academic levels to be able to enter the DATC, gaining parenting skills, and obtaining employment readiness.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Canyon Heights should continue their efforts to systematically collect and analyze pertinent student data to guide decisions made by the school. This effort should extend to disaggregating data for both the parenting students as well as the non-parenting students. In the future, it would be helpful to include data on graduation and drop out rates among students returning to their home high schools as well as a detailed analysis of course grades, attendance, and discipline patterns among different student subgroups.

**Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:**

- It is suggested that Canyon Heights track graduation and drop out rates among students returning to their home high schools.
- Future profiles could include data on the school wide impact of the addition of the non-parenting student population.
- It is suggested that the profile include a more comprehensive analysis of course grades, attendance, and discipline patterns.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS**

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Canyon Heights administration has made a concentrated effort to engage the various stakeholder groups in a collaborative self-study process. The principal, Judy Nixon, was instrumental in facilitating this process. It was most evident that a long-term self-study had been undertaken for the past three and one-half years in preparation for the accreditation visit. School focus groups, community council, student council, administration (local and district), as well as all faculty members are to be commended for their participation in the comprehensive analysis of Canyon Heights current practice.

Due to a small faculty, Principal Nixon chose to have all staff members participate in focus group sessions where they examined the indicators in the seven areas of quality schools. In interviews with parents, staff, and students it was apparent that all stakeholders played an integral part in the development of the school's mission and belief statements and in the identification of school

improvement goals. They are commended for the detailed summaries of those focus groups.

Canyon Heights faces a challenge in recruiting and retaining active members of their community council. It is recommended that the school continue in their efforts to consistently and actively involve their community council in the school improvement process.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

There were a number of detailed charts and graphs presented to illustrate the status of Canyon Heights. The profile of student populations in a variety of ways illustrated the challenges and strengths of the school and its faculty. Individual surveys of students, administration, faculty and the community were evident.

Information presented in the school's self study was very informative in identifying strengths and weaknesses. We would like to commend the staff for the insightful list of school strengths and weaknesses, contained in the profile. Candor, honesty, and commitment to school improvement were present in all aspects of the report. It is recommended that the staff take a closer look at strengths and weaknesses with regard to their academic program focused on the core curriculum as well as analysis of student discipline and management.

### **CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

Canyon Heights High School's desired results for student learning are as follows:

1. **Learning to Learn: Acquire basic skills in reading, writing, and math**
  - Students will read at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level or better in both informative and fictional modes and demonstrate their ability to comprehend literal and inferential questions.
  - Students will produce essays and other written responses that show adequate organizational, creative, and syntactic elements at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade level or better.
  - Students will understand basic number theory and can adequately perform basic math functions including computation of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems; the function, computation, and manipulation of fractions, decimals, percents, and ratios; understanding and utilization of basic algebra concepts; and the basics of geometry including geometric figures, area and circumference.
2. **Vocational Readiness**

- Students will obtain knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the workplace.
- 3. **Personal Responsibility**
  - Students will show habits of responsibility and self-discipline as demonstrated by their punctuality, school attendance, respect for others, completion of assignments, and adherence to school policy.
- 4. **Student Retention and Graduation Outcomes**
  - Student drop out and graduation rates will improve.
  - Progress will be made in implementing student aggregate group support.

### **Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

Over the past decade, Canyon Heights conducted strategic planning which included thorough deliberation regarding a school mission statement. In the spring of 2001, gaining familiarity with the School Profile and upon obtaining consensus for school belief statements, the staff reviewed and discussed themes that repeated through these statements. Students and community councils also held discussions regarding both the belief and mission statements. All shareholder groups (school staff, parents, and students) concurred that the mission statement agreed upon five years ago, still reflected a consensual school agenda. The mission statement was confirmed as being consistent with the district Model for Public Education. The word “empowerment” was settled on, after much deliberation, to denote students overcoming personal challenges and attainment of skills, knowledge, values, vocational readiness, and commitment to lifelong learning as specifically delineated in the district model.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The result of Canyon Heights’ demographics and school profile information brought forth interesting discussion. Parents, teachers, students, and staff all participated in examining what was believed necessary for students regarding education. Demographics and assessments of the student body were taken into consideration as the school beliefs and mission were reviewed. The staff engaged in a study of current educational research about the teaching and learning processes, future societal trends, and changing expectations in today’s workplace. A consensus was obtained regarding the research; challenges and opportunities students will face in the future.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The staff at Canyon Heights should be commended for their efforts to involve the entire staff in the process of defining the school's mission and beliefs. The faculty participated in a two-day retreat in the spring of 1999 to discuss and establish mission and beliefs of the school. Both certified and classified staff members were involved to discuss the school's strategic plan. Student and community councils were presented with the mission and belief statements and then adopted in the fall of 2001. As a result of the work done on creating and refining the mission and belief statements, the Desired Results for Student Learning were developed. They were a natural outgrowth of the process of examining survey results, mission/belief statements, and assessment data. We recommend that the staff and stakeholders revisit the DRSLs often to keep focused on their plans for school improvement.

### **Curriculum Development:**

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The team observed numerous instances and discussions with administration and teachers wherein the core curriculum (State) was identified and integrated into the curriculum. Integrated curriculum techniques were also evident. The small class size and proximity of each of the classes facilitates teachers working together to assist each other and at times to even engage in "team-teaching."

Staff members also utilize their early release time to explore best practices to support a diverse student population. Goals set by departments as well as activities outlined in the action plan will help the staff focus on implementation of the DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The Canyon Heights staff worked collaboratively to develop the basic goals for student learning. All teachers, administration, and the counseling department staff were included in the process. It was evident in discussions with staff members that the process of defining the Desired Results for Student Learning was very valuable. Staff members seemed willing and motivated to invest personal time to accomplish their school goals. As a result of this commitment, students at Canyon Heights are experiencing increased academic success. Departmental reports also reflect a collaborative effort to set goals aligned with their Desired Results for Student Learning as well as alignment with state and national standards.

### **Quality Instructional Design:**

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The visiting team had the opportunity to visit most classrooms as well as interview many students. As a result the team observed a variety of teaching strategies being used including: tests, hands-on activities, independent learning, lecture, peer editing and small group activities. Students reported that teachers put forth extra effort and time to ensure their individual success. There is a very positive atmosphere that exists between students and staff at Canyon Heights. It is recommended that Canyon Heights continue to focus on their DRSL's as they work together to improve student learning.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The visiting team had the opportunity to visit most classrooms and observed a wide variety of effective instructional strategies to actively engage students. In classes that were randomly observed, there were several strategies implemented that took into account the unique needs of the student population at Canyon Heights. Some observed strategies included: lecture, discussion, creative writing, visual displays, student presentations, use of technology, and cooperative learning groups. The Math and Careers classes were notable examples of creative teacher strategies that were easily implemented to help different students. Music, role-playing, timed quizzes, hands-on laboratory (Science) were all evident.

It was also evident that teachers wanted students to succeed. Teachers were found giving one to one instruction and assistance. There was a relaxed comfortable environment for learning present. Students appeared to be comfortable sharing their opinions and knowledge in class. Learning experiences seemed to be very hands-on with many opportunities for student participation.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Because of the unique situation of students attending Canyon Heights there is a high level of personal support provided for students. School activities promote social support as well as academic opportunities. One significant support for Canyon Heights young parent students is having quality, no cost on-campus child-care while they are attending school. Their facility is operated by Head Start and is part of the school facility. It has nine classrooms, five of which have separate baby sleep rooms with each child having his/her own crib. Canyon Heights shares the child-care slots with the DATC (in exchange for donating the ground for the building) which sometimes makes it necessary for Canyon Heights students to be placed on a waiting list. The school accommodates when no other

child-care service is available by providing students with home study services. Nursing mothers with babies in the on-campus child-care are accommodated and are allowed time to feed their babies as needed. Because the majority of students are young parent students this model has several advantages which support student learning including: students are able to remain in class for the full school day, students are not worried or overwhelmed with finding child care, caregivers are certified and trained, students receive services from Early Head Start with two full-time family service workers, a child care director, and a full time prenatal nurse. The entire child-care wing of the building is protected with a sophisticated security system monitored by a full-time receptionist.

Discussions with staff members and students reflect the caring, nurturing environment that exists. Supports within the school are focused on basic human needs. Some of those supports are as follows:

Adoption support groups	Home Study
Career Fair	Lunch and Breakfast programs
Community Council	Nurse interventionist
Davis County Food Bank drops	Relationship/Family support groups
Drug and Alcohol support group	School to Careers
Head Start childcare	Smoking cessation program
Head Start prenatal care	Student and community council
Homeless committee	
Homeroom	

### **Quality Assessment Systems:**

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

There is a consensus among staff members that a need exists to identify school wide assessments to enable staff members to understand the skill levels of students. Regular and varied assessments are being used as well as teachers implementing performance assessments to measure growth in individual classrooms. However, with reading, writing and math skills as a school wide focus, the standards of performance in each area must be clarified in a rubric or other assessment measure that would accurately reflect student performance. We encourage the staff to continue to explore a variety of assessments both formal and informal that can assess student learning.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The staff seems to recognize their need to collect data from assessments beyond standardized testing. The consensus of the staff on developing and utilizing



rubrics to assess achievement in the Desired Results for Student Learning is unanimous and would provide valuable additional data. Individualization and differentiation is taking place in most classrooms and will only be strengthened by expanding the conversations among staff, parents and students, regarding who is not making academic progress at Canyon Heights and why.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

There is ongoing administrative support for access to and use of data to improve student performance. Staff members are in agreement that sharing performance standards and utilizing rubrics to clarify expectations would increase fairness and accountability and eliminate biases and distortion. As teachers work to include multiple assessment measures aligned to their performance standards, equity and fairness will be further guaranteed.

### **Leadership for School Improvement:**

- a) *To what extent does the leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The administration made the decision to change the school schedule to accommodate an early out on Thursday afternoons. This provides valuable time for collaboration. One to two hours per week have been devoted to planning and collaboration in the school improvement process. The administration has also been supportive and instrumental in encouraging classes for professional development for staff members. The fact that teachers feel valued and supported by the administration has a positive effect on the school environment. There is a clear, strong, leadership focus on instructional goals. Dedication to the accreditation process has helped to refine this focus. The principal has instituted a six-year program of professional staff development aligned to the DRSL's.

- b) *To what extent does leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The action plan for Canyon Heights is comprehensive and closely follows the school's Desired Results for Student Learning. Some of the actions steps are based on validated research and student performance data while others represent ideas supported by identified school needs. The school has done a good job at determining the timeline, persons responsible, inservice, resources, and methods of assessment in their action plan. Canyon Heights made a sincere effort to survey students, parents, and staff. While the survey data did reveal some problem areas that are addressed in the action plan, it was noted that the need to better educate parents about school programs, processes, and involvement was not directly addressed in the action plan. The administration has collected and

analyzed significant demographic data over the past four years as shown in their profile. Analysis of data has been effectively used to modify and structure classes to student's needs, expectations, and available resources. Because of the unique nature of the school, individual faculty members were involved in reviewing the research in the areas of educational and societal trends, alternative education theory, and communication. The staff also participated in current review of literature in areas of future trends, educational theory, assessment and learning theory. The study of these research-based materials proved to be very valuable as the staff worked together to develop their school improvement plan.

- c) *To what extent does leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The monitoring of student progress at Canyon Heights is accomplished primarily through individual class assignments, tests, quizzes, and project completion. Individual classes, for the most part had daily and weekly worksheets, quizzes, and assignments to assist instructors in monitoring students progress.

The school administration has taken steps to improve the monitoring of student progress in achieving essential knowledge and skills. The school is in the process of school-wide pre/post testing in areas of reading, writing and math. Most subjects accomplish interval assessment including end-of-level testing which are reviewed with each department and faculty.

The school administration recognizes the need to move toward better use of data and improved assessment measures in order to assess and monitor student learning and instructional effectiveness.

- d) *To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The leadership at Canyon Heights provides competent management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school. The parent, student, and staff surveys indicated high regard for the positive culture and climate of the school. School wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission statement.

- e) *To what extent does the leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

Achievement of the Desired Results for Student Learning is reflected in Canyon Height's action plan. Each step is supported by an explanation of resources to be used. The unique nature of the school provides them with support services,

business partnerships, and district support, as well as supplemental grant monies that are used to support many of the school goals. Staff members collaborate on making decisions for curriculum expenditures. All school expenditures require signed approval by the administrator.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

A Student Council and Community Council are quite active in supporting and encouraging the mission of the school. It was notable that there were numerous focus groups, patrons serving as mentors, volunteers, and local businesses involved with the efforts of Canyon Heights to meet its mission.

There continues to be frustration with administration and staff at Canyon Heights with low parent participation in activities designed to involve parents in their child's academic success. The team noted that progress has been made over the past year particularly with involving the parents of the non-parenting student population. It is recommended that the school continue in their efforts to involve parents through letters, personal phone calls, announcements, etc.

Canyon Heights is to be commended for their extensive involvement with community agencies and business partners. Most significant is the contribution made by the Early Head Start organization which provides high quality, on-campus child care for the teen parent students.

### **Community Building:**

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The visiting team was impressed with the positive climate and culture of Canyon Heights. There was a feeling of cooperation, support, and respect among the staff members. It was obvious that they loved working with the students and genuinely wanted to help them be successful. It was evident after visiting with student council members as well as other students that there exists a strong support system to assure student success at Canyon Heights.

There is strong evidence that the school works hard at creating and sustaining a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. We encourage the staff to continue to collaborate across departments to foster collegiality and to support the needs of individual students.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The visiting team was impressed with the time spent with the community council. They expressed the concerns they had with maintaining and sustaining active parent involvement. As discussed earlier, this continues to be a challenge for Canyon Heights. We recommend that they continue in their efforts to find ways of involving parents in their student's education. Again we commend the school for their outstanding business partnerships, and community agencies who continue to lend support to student learning.

### **Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:**

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The staff has been involved in professional development at a variety of levels including Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum and Six Traits Writing. Teachers also have the advantage of an early release day on Thursday which allows time for collaboration as departments, whole staff, and committees as well as time for school wide staff development.

The administration also encourages and at times requires staff members to participate in job related training such as: Attention Deficit, Student Assistance, Human Dynamics, Control Therapy, Drop-out Prevention and other trainings provided by the district.

The visiting team recommends that the leadership team focus on the goals for on-going staff development as outlined in their action plan.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

Canyon Heights has a dedicated staff led by a highly qualified and motivated principal. Students, parents, and teachers reflect a positive attitude toward efforts to lead the staff through the process of school improvement. It was also evident that there exists strong support for this school from district administration. As a staff, they have all been actively involved as participants in the accreditation process and they have a desire to work together to focus on student learning and school wide improvement.

Because of the staff's commitment to Canyon Heights and the success of the students who attend, they will continue to move forward to create an atmosphere and culture of learning and success for all students.

**CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS  
AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU)  
STANDARDS I-X**

**Standard I – Educational Program**

This standard is not met. As of the annual report, dated October 15, 2002, core credit was being awarded for non-core classes, i.e., Physical Education and Math resource, which are not core classes.

**Standard II – Student Personnel Services**

This standard is met.

**Standard III – School Plant and Equipment**

This standard is met.

**Standard IV – Library Media Program**

This standard is not met. No certificated library media personnel. Needs to be addressed (see recommendations).

**Standard V – Records**

This standard is met.

**Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)**

This standard was not met. The self-study was not complete at the time of the annual report.

**Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel**

This standard is met, however teaches qualifications are not in CACTUS system.

**Standard VIII – Administration**

This standard is met.

**Standard IX – Teacher Load**

This standard is met.

**Standard X – Activities**

This standard is met.

## **CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN**

- a) *To what extent is the school wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan at Canyon Heights addresses the Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs) as areas of focus for continuous school improvement. The DRSLs include: (1) Learning to Learn, (2) Vocational Readiness, (3) Personal Responsibility and (4) Student Retention and Graduation Outcomes. The action plans for each of the DRSLs are detailed, extensive and organized. The plan was reviewed by the staff to ensure that each step, with its accompanying time line, resources, person responsible, inservice, and assessments, were in alignment with the school mission, belief statements, Desired Results for Student Learning.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school wide and system wide?*

The entire staff at Canyon Heights worked collaboratively to compile and obtain a consensus on the school-wide learning goals, prior to developing a six-year plan for accomplishing those goals. After completion of the action plan, it was again submitted to the staff for further feedback and input. Staff members were committed to accepting the plan as their official document for school improvement. All members of this small faculty are involved and committed to the responsibility of seeing the plan to completion. The entire plan was ratified by the staff as their official school-wide strategy for improvement of the ensuing six years.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school wide action plan appear to be?*

The follow-up process for monitoring the accomplishments of the action plan is detailed and includes specific steps for evaluation of each of their goals. Persons responsible for each goal will follow through with monitoring the evaluation process. The school improvement team will continue to meet and discuss strategies and give feedback with regard to their action plan and goal accomplishments.

## **CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM**

### **Commendations:**

- The administration and staff are commended for their diligent efforts in creating and supporting a learning environment for an at-risk student population that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging in every facet of the work of the school.
- The staff is commended for their positive and productive working relationships with each other, administration, students, parents, and feeder schools. It was clear from student, parent, and staff interviews that people genuinely care about each other and more importantly have a desire to work together to meet the unique and diverse academic and emotional needs of all student populations represented in the school
- The school is commended on their support for improvement initiatives outlined in their action plan. Interviews with teachers indicated a strong desire and commitment to follow through with departmental goals written to support the school's Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs).
- The staff is commended on their efforts to work together collaboratively to build consensus in defining the school's mission statement, beliefs and goals. It was evident that early out days were instrumental in providing consistent blocks of time for the work of data gathering and analysis, goal setting, and examining strengths and weaknesses of current practice.
- The administration and staff are commended on their professionalism. They are highly involved in the day-to-day routines and culture of this unique and challenging school. They are friendly, confident and positive.

### **Recommendations:**

- The media center at Canyon Heights should have a certified media coordinator. Because of size limitations of the school and its unique student population the school would be well served to share a certified librarian with Mountain High School. The library media program is suitably funded but seems to suffer from inadequate management by a certified and licensed media coordinator.
- The school should continue to refine its self-study document by collecting, disaggregating, and further analyzing student data, particularly with the "non-parent group".

- It is recommended that the school continue in their efforts to collect and analyze student data with regard to student dropout and graduation rates including students who return to their home high schools.
- It is recommended that the school continue to explore a variety of assessments both formal and informal, to better enable staff members to assess student learning and skill levels.
- The school should continue to make every effort to actively involve the school community council in the school improvement process and look for ways to improve parent participation.
- It is recommended that the school look at ways to expand their physical education program.